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BOOKS OF AMERICAN HISTORY

Party Government in the United States. By WILLIAM MILLIGAN SLOANE. Seth Low Professor of History, Columbia University. (New York and London: Harper and Brothers. 1914. Pp. xvii, 451.)

THIS is a compact résumé of the history of American parties and of the American Congress from the adoption of the Constitution to the present time. Intermingled with this historical summary are brief discussions on some large themes in government, politics, and law—such as representation and suffrage; the doctrine of equality; the origin and character of American parties, and their relation to civil liberty, democracy, and social cleavage; the nature of the presidency and other departmental functionaries of the American government; the Constitution and its relation to popular sovereignty and loose construction; together with the party convention system and the relation of parties to state and city government. This description and partial list of topics indicate the immensity of the subject which Professor Sloane has attempted to treat within the limits of less than 400 pages. The extensive appendix of over fifty pages includes the Articles of Confederation; the Constitution of the United States; the dates of the admission of the states; the successive presidential candidates of all parties since 1789, with their respective popular and electoral votes; the population of the slave and free sections at every decennial census, with their Congressional representation; and the cabinet officers of the successive administrations. This affords very useful material for purposes of reference.

The scope of the volume is too large for its limits. To elementary readers it will prove to be confusing and to advanced students unsatisfying, though in many places suggestive. The extremely condensed character of the volume is accounted for by the statement that it is an elaboration of a course of lectures delivered in the universities of Berlin and Munich while Professor Sloane was acting as American Roosevelt Professor in Germany. These young Germans of the universities, no doubt, have been well disciplined and they may have been able to attack, conquer, and digest the great army of related facts with which the volume is fortified. The American sophomore will probably not fare so well in his attempt to arrange this material in his mind. The multiplicity of events will worry and discourage him. While the volume seems singularly free from positive error of statement (considering the multitude of events that are dealt with) yet on almost every page the reader stands in need of further elaboration and explanation. On one page we find the 28th Congress with "a Democratic majority in both houses"; on the following page (p. 129) "the expiring Republican majority" of the same Congress, "voted hitherto unheard-of sums for different internal improvements". Is this an error of statement or does the author intend the reader to understand that in that era of party his-

tory, the party names "Democratic" and "Republican" were identical? Space is needed for explanation. A chapter is devoted to the "Republican Party" of 1845-1846.

On many other pages it will be seen that the attempt to pack so much information on so many large subjects within such narrow compass has its drawbacks and dangers. Matters are left unexplained and half-told, with misleading results. This may be illustrated by Professor Sloane's treatment of the origin of the Republican party: "In the year 1856 was formed the third loose-construction party. It took the name of Republican. Its program included protection, internal improvements, a national-bank currency and the control by Congress of slavery within the Territories" (pp. 191-192). This tells the story of the new party, of its genesis and its purposes. If the passage is intended as a swift stroke of the brush to portray ten or twenty years of party history in a broad general way, it may find some apology; but as to instruction, for young or old, it is inadequate and seriously misleading. The new party had its origin in 1854: to prevent slavery in the territories was its primary purpose—everything else was incidental; protection was not one of its party tenets until six years later, and a national-bank currency, or the bank issue, was not within the scope of the party programme at all; and, as a matter of fact, in its early years the Republican party (while out of power) was disposed to fall back on the strict construction and the states'-rights, compact view of the Constitution, as is to be seen in the attitude of Sumner and Chase and others in their opposition to the exercise of national power for the recovery of fugitive slaves, as also in the case of Booth in Wisconsin and the Wellington rescue in Ohio. It would seem that such a notable period in party history really demands, in almost any book on the subject, more attention than Professor Sloane was able to give to it in the space at command. Better proportion by elimination elsewhere would have helped.

Such are the faults of the volume. It has its merits. It is a marvel that the author has been able to crowd so many things within its pages. It is a compendium of suggestions and topics which a student may wish to trace out or look up, though the volume itself would help none, since it gives no references or citations. It is a laborious and able compilation by an eminent and highly respected author whose name will carry weight; but it is made up from secondary sources and those altogether too few in number to bring to the volume the advantage that might have come from a wider reading. It is based largely, as the author says, on three books: Johnston's *American Politics*, Bryce's *American Politics* (*American Commonwealth?*), and Ford's *Rise and Growth of American Politics*. Excellent as these books are, they are themselves generalizations or condensations, and the reviewer is forced to the conclusion that the sources of the author's information were too limited for the ambitious scope of his volume. It would have been better to have attempted less and told more.

JAMES A. WOODBURN.